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TO: IMMEDIATE SAIGON, [REDACTED]

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF INTERAGENCY {DIA/CIA/INR} MEMORANDUM
ON THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM.

3. BEGIN TEXT.

SUBJECT: ASSESSMENT OF THE MILITARY SITUATION AND PROSPECTS FOR
SOUTH VIETNAM

1. SOUTH VIETNAM'S MILITARY FORTUNES CONTINUE TO DECLINE.
THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM ARMED FORCES {RVNAF} HAVE RELINQUISHED
WELL OVER HALF THE COUNTRY, LOST NEARLY HALF OF THEIR REGULAR
COMBAT FORCES, AND SUFFERED EXTREMELY HEAVY EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLY
LOSSES. THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP IS DEMORALIZED, AND THE MORALE
AND DISCIPLINE OF REMAINING GOVERNMENT FORCES ARE OPEN TO
SERIOUS QUESTION. TAKING ALL FACTORS INTO ACCOUNT, THE ONLY
QUESTION OVER THE DEFEAT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM IS TIMING --

DATE: 4 APR 1975
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WHETHER IT WILL COLLAPSE OR BE MILITARILY OVERWHELMED IN A PERIOD
OF WEEKS OR MONTHS.4

THE CURRENT SITUATION4

2. THE NORTH VIETNAMESE HAVE RECOGNIZED SOUTH VIETNAM'S
VULNERABILITY AND APPEAR DETERMINED TO TAKE RAPID ADVANTAGE OF
IT.4

3. AT PRESENT, THERE ARE EIGHT WELL-EQUIPPED AND WELL-
SUPPLIED NVA INFANTRY DIVISIONS IN MILITARY REGIONS (MR) 3 AND
4 AND AN ADDITIONAL TEN DIVISIONS FARTHER NORTH IN SOUTH VIETNAM.
MOREOVER, HANOI IS COMMITTING THE BULK OF ITS REMAINING RESERVE
FORCES TO SOUTH VIETNAM. THE COMMUNISTS COULD DEPLOY A DECISIVE
FORCE TO THE BATTLE AREA IN ABOUT A MONTH. IF A CRASH MOVE WERE
ORDERED. THEIR LOGISTIC CAPABILITIES ARE SUFFICIENT TO SUPPORT
SUCH FORCES.4

4. THE GVN HAS SEVEN INFANTRY DIVISIONS, RANGERS, TERRI-
TORIAL FORCES, AND THE REMNANTS OF THREE DIVISIONS EXTRACTED
FROM THE NORTH. ADDITIONAL COMBAT UNITS WILL BE FORMED FROM
THE GVN FORCES EVACUATED FROM MRS 1 AND 2, BUT THEIR COMBAT

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EFFECTIVENESS, EXCEPT PERHAPS FOR THE MARINES, WILL BE DOUBTFUL.
 SOME TERRITORIAL FORCES ARE NOW BEING INTEGRATED INTO REGULAR
 ARVN UNITS. FINALLY, THE GVN STILL RETAINS A SIZABLE AIR FORCE.4

5. WE NOW SEE TWO GENERAL COMMUNIST COURSES OF MILITARY
 ACTION.4

-- THE APPLICATION OF MASSIVE FORCE TO INFLICT FINAL
 DEFEAT.4

-- ENVELOP SAIGON, CUT OFF ITS SUPPLIES, AND THEREBY
 BRING THE GVN TO ITS KNEES.4

6. THE COMMUNISTS WOULD HAVE TWO OPTIONS WITHIN THE FIRST
 COURSE OF ACTION. IN ONE, THE NVA COULD CHOOSE TO EXPLOIT TO
 THE MAXIMUM THEIR CURRENT MILITARY MOMENTUM AND RVNAF WEAKNESSES.
 THIS WOULD INVOLVE THE RAPID, ALBEIT PIECEMEAL, REINFORCEMENT OF
 MR 3 AND CONTINUOUS LARGE-SCALE ATTACKS BEGINNING AT ANY TIME.
 THIS WOULD ENTAIL RISKS FOR THE COMMUNISTS BECAUSE IT WOULD NOT
 CONFRONT THE GVN WITH OVERWHELMING FORCE AT THE OUTSET. MOREOVER,
 COMMUNIST LOSSES MIGHT BE HIGH, THEREBY WEAKENING THEIR MILITARY
 PUNCH.4

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7. AS A SECOND OPTION, THE COMMUNISTS COULD DELAY AN ASSAULT ON THE CAPITAL FOR A MONTH OR SO, WHILE CONSOLIDATING THEIR GAINS IN THE NORTHERN HALF OF THE COUNTRY, DEPLOYING ADDITIONAL INFANTRY DIVISIONS SOUTH, AND PREPARING THE BATTLE-FIELD. THIS WOULD GIVE THE GVN TIME TO RALLY ITS FORCES AND POPULATION AND TO RECONSTITUTE SOME OF THE UNITS EVACUATED FROM THE NORTH. WITH THEIR BACKS TO THE WALL, MANY RVNAF UNITS WOULD FIGHT WELL. SOUTH VIETNAMESE CONFIDENCE WOULD BE BOLSTERED BY ACCELERATED US ASSISTANCE AND BY EVIDENCE THAT THE US WILL SEND MORE. CORRESPONDINGLY, THE DETERIORATION AND ULTIMATE COLLAPSE OF THE GVN WOULD BE ACCELERATED BY A NEGATIVE RESPONSE ON THE PART OF THE US.

8. CONSIDERING HANOI'S ABILITY TO MASS GREATLY SUPERIOR FORCES, HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE THAT UNDER EITHER OF THESE OPTIONS, THE GVN WOULD COLLAPSE OR BE DEFEATED BY THE END OF JUNE, IF NOT CONSIDERABLY SOONER.

9. THE OTHER MAJOR COURSE OPEN TO THE COMMUNISTS WOULD BE TO ENVELOP SAIGON WITH AUGMENTED FORCES, BUT OFF ITS SUPPLIES,

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AND SIMULTANEOUSLY ATTRITE DEFENDING FORCES. THE RECENT MOVEMENT OF ELEMENTS OF TWO NVA DIVISIONS FROM TAY NINH PROVINCE TO THE NORTHERN DELTA IS IN LINE WITH SUCH A STRATEGY. AT PRESENT, THESE UNITS AND OTHERS ALREADY IN MR 4 ARE THREATENING MAJOR CITIES AND THE IMPORTANT RICE DISTRIBUTION ROUTE FROM THE DELTA TO SAIGON. THIS WOULD ADD TO THE ALREADY FORMIDABLE PRESSURES ON THE CITY. WE BELIEVE THAT THIS LIMITED COURSE OF ACTION MIGHT ALONE BE SUCCESSFUL SO THAT THE GVN WOULD FALL BY THE END OF JUNE.4

10. HANOI RECOGNIZES THAT POLITICAL AND MILITARY FACTORS WILL CONTINUE TO INTERACT. GOVERNMENTAL CHANGES IN SAIGON, GVN MILITARY PERFORMANCE, AND THE EVOLVING STATE OF PUBLIC AND RVNAF MORALE WILL CONDITION ITS FINAL PLANNING. THE FACT THAT THERE IS LITTLE ROOM FOR RETREAT MAY STIFFEN THE RESOLVE OF SAIGON'S FORCES. NONETHELESS, A SUDDEN PSYCHOLOGICAL UNRAVELING ALONG THE LINES THAT OCCURRED IN THE NORTHERN HALF OF THE COUNTRY IS DISTINCTLY POSSIBLE. IN SUCH AN EVENT, A COMMUNIST VICTORY WOULD FOLLOW IN SHORT ORDER.4

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11. IN THIS REGARD, HANOI PROBABLY HOPES THAT A COMBINATION OF THE ABOVE FACTORS WILL MAKE ■■■UNNECESSARY A FINAL DIRECT ASSAULT ON SAIGON. THIS WOULD SPARE THE COMMUNISTS THE PROBLEMS OF FEEDING AND HOUSING THE POPULATION OF A CITY DESTROYED BY A PITCHED BATTLE. AND IT WOULD MINIMIZE DAMAGE TO VITAL FACILITIES AND RESOURCES WHICH HANOI WOULD PREFER TO CAPTURE INTACT. THESE INTERESTS ■SEEM REFLECTED BY RECENT COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA AND BY THE 10-POINT POLICY TOWARD "LIBERATED AREAS" BROADCAST BY THE COMMUNISTS ON APRIL 3. ALTHOUGH PRIMARILY DESIGNED TO BRING ORDER AND STABILITY TO NEWLY CONQUERED REGIONS AS FAST AS POSSIBLE, THESE PRONOUNCEMENTS WERE PROBABLY ALSO DESIGNED TO INCREASE PRESSURES IN SAIGON FOR A "NEGOTIATED" SETTLEMENT AND TO HASTEN THE POLITICAL CRUMBLING THAT IS ALREADY IN TRAIN. FURTHERMORE, THE POLITICAL ADVANTAGES GAINED BY SOUTH VIETNAM'S COLLAPSE WITHOUT A MAJOR BATTLE FOR SAIGON WOULD BE SUBSTANTIAL.

12. IN SUM, HANOI IS IN GOOD POSITION TO TAKE WHATEVER ACTION IT CONSIDERS NECESSARY TO WIN THE WAR. WHILE A QUICK, DECISIVE MILITARY STROKE MAY BE IN THE WORKS, WE BELIEVE THAT

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HANOI WILL OPT FOR A LESS COSTLY AND POLITICALLY MORE EXPEDIENT ALTERNATIVE, CALCULATING THAT A SOUTH VIETNAMESE COLLAPSE FROM WITHIN IS NEAR AT HAND. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, COMMUNIST UNITS WILL POSITION THEMSELVES FOR A FINAL ATTACK SHOULD THEIR PREFERRED COURSE FAIL. WHATEVER THE CASE, SOUTH VIETNAM'S FATE APPEARS TO BE SEALED. TAKING ALL FACTORS INTO ACCOUNT, THE ONLY QUESTION IS TIMING -- WHETHER WEEKS OR MONTHS. E2 IMPDET.H

DATE: 4 APR 1975
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WILLIAM WELLS, C/EUR

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B. E. LAYTON, ACTING NIO/SSEA

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